



Acton Historic District Commission
Meeting January 10, 2012
Minutes

TOWN CLERK, ACTON

Meeting was called to order at 7:30 by Chair, Kathy Acerb-Bachman (KAB).

Also present were Anita Rogers (AR), Pamela Lynn (PL), Ron Rose (RR), Michaela Moran (MM), David Barrat (DB) and Mike Gowing (MG), BoS liaison.

There were no citizens' concerns.

Minutes of the 12/13/2011 were approved unanimously by consent.

7:45 Application 1166 WAVE 541 Mass. Ave.: Mathias Rosenfeld (MR) appeared on behalf of WAVE to present proposed use of "Leaf Guard" type gutters for the building at 541 Mass. Ave. The purpose is to protect the premises from rotting from a collection of rainwater. MR presented two different options, A and B differing only in the placement of the down spouts on the building. RR Option A is preferable to Option B. DB Same opinion. AR, PL and KAB also found option A preferable to option B. MM The use of the "Leaf Guard" type gutter is acceptable on this building. Its appearance does not contrast with the architecture of the building. AR moved to accept the gutters and placement of downspouts as shown in option A presented by MR. This style of gutter would not be considered appropriate for the other buildings in the West Acton Historic District. Motion was approved unanimously.

KAB noted that PL has spent considerable time working with DocuShare to scan in three years worth of HDC records for access on line.

KAB reminded those HDC commissioners who have not taken the most recent and open meetings tests on line to do so as soon as possible.

8:00 Public hearing reopened concerning the discussion of sign in the West Acton Historical District for the promulgation of revisions to the Historical District sign guidelines with regard to window signs. Richard Calendrella (RC) is the only citizen in attendance. MM is the liaison and presented a summary of the discussion held at the first public hearing on the matter on December 13, 2011. Certain signs such as hours of operation and credit cards accepted, could appear in the window in an area of 8.5" by 11." Other community service notices could occupy a larger space of 11 by 17 inches. Lettering in a window sign would not take up more than 25% of the surface area of the window. Temporary signs such as sandwich signs could be replaced by flag-type signs where there is not enough room on the sidewalk in front of the store or other business for proper and safe use of sandwich signs. Such signs are limited in use to a total 45 days per year. Temporary signs appearing in windows cannot occupy more than 10% of the window surface.

Window signs are considered to benefit pedestrian traffic. Projecting wall signs are for viewing by vehicular traffic. It is possible therefore to allow a business to have two

different signs, one in the window and one projecting. This is at odds with the current sign bylaw.

KAB Window lettering; painted, stenciled, vinyl and decals. Decals are preferable over vinyl that look more like color forms. RR Vinyl is acceptable if the lettering is on the inside of the window so that the layering is not visible. All lettering should be on the inside. KAB Vinyl letters are not in favor; the visual quality is less than with decals or painted lettering suggesting a hand crafted quality which is better. RR Lettering on the inside of the window is less subject to vandalism. It would be good to have a tutorial from a sign maker. PL supports having a tutorial. DB Business should have the option of deciding which side of the glass the lettering goes.

Comments from the public: Dick Calendrella Signs subject of an Economic Development Committee effort to work on the sign bylaw. Working with Roland Bartl. Among the items being studied is the \$300/day fine for violating the bylaws. Change the penalty to provide for up to a \$300/day fine for violations. The bylaws need to be updated to include such things as LEDs (light emitting diodes). Would benefit from input from a sign expert who could present examples of window signs. Check out sign on Charles Street. MM "Open" and "Closed" signs should be 8" by 11", placed near the entrance, and be easy to switch over. They should be two colors only, possibly black and white.

RR Colors could be used to blend in with other signage. MG Flags could be used instead of standard Open-Closed signs. MM Community Service notices could be 11" by 17". Flags could be a substitute for these if there is insufficient frontage for sandwich signs. Perhaps we could use banners draped on the buildings. The buildings especially in West Acton Historic District are unique; what fits on one building may not be appropriate on another.

The public hearing will be continued until the next meeting, Tuesday, January 24, 2012 at 8:30PM to give town counsel a chance to spot any other issues. We may use an alternate meeting space if public access is an issue.

Application #1165 for a sign and consideration of the use of a gazebo (not on the application) for Meeting House Hill. Appear for the applicant members of the Acton Garden Club, Pat Kosicki, Susanne Fuller, Cathy Fochtman and Maureen Christmas. PL is the liaison. The sign proposed is wood, 18" wide and 28" long and created by Paul Tucker of Sign Logics. It will be two-sided. The new sign will replace one that was lost.

MM There is a lot of wording that needs more space. Drivers can't read all information at once. It needs to be cleaned up. The seal at the bottom could be removed to make more space for the wording. Go down a size in the font. RR There is lots of stuff on the sign. DB finds sign acceptable as is.

The sign should be larger up to 2' by 3' to be more legible. Use fewer words. Give the words more space. PL Make it larger. We could read the old sign. Keep the words "Public Welcome." Leave the seal at the bottom. Emphasize "1736." Use of different fonts makes it appear too cluttered. KAB The edges are a bit too tight. It should be condensed. Prefers to

have the seal removed. Remove 1736, use consistent fonts. Widen the borders on the edges. This will be continued to January 24, 2012 at 7:45.

RE: Gazebo proposed for construction on Meeting House Hill> Reference is made to a handout. It will be the focal point to the historical site. It will be a place to 'hang out.' The building will be wooden, 16' wide, octagonal and painted white for ease of maintenance. It will have a handicapped ramp unit in the back. Reeds Ferry is one of the contractors considered to construct the gazebo. They built the gazebo at the high school. Another is Decks Plus. There will be enough space around the structure to facilitate mowing. MM We can't electrify it. The design proposed is very generic. Prefers a simpler perhaps rectangular structure. Need to look at other designs. RR and DB find proposed design acceptable. AR to see the proposed structure on a site plan. Let the shape of the area determine the shape of the building rather than going with a "kit" design. KAB Agrees with MM and AR. RR It would be useful to have a site visit. Measure 16' to see where it would be best located. Agrees with MM and AR that the design in the document presented is very generic, not in character with the environment. No application for the construction of a gazebo has been submitted yet.

Application #1167 Jason Henson. Application for a sign at 537 Massachusetts Avenue. The sign will be placed on the stairway enclosure. It will be a red sign with white lettering on wood, 3.5' by 2'. MM likes the lettering. The sign does not need a border. RR likes the color. The letter spacing doesn't seem balanced. Sample provided was black and white. The proposed sign needs to be printed up so we are able to view what will be in place so we can vote on it.

CPC Project updates. Train landscaping: Attending from the SATSAC is David Martin (DM). CPC is interested in this project but wants more detail to see how it will work with the T's plan for landscaping. The T's extent of ownership of adjacent properties needs to be determined. How will the T control the funding? What will the T do with its budgeted \$60,000? What percentage will be spent on design? Not ready in a month for now. What is plan for going forward? We need to have a representative from the T meet with the CPC. Phil Brake (PB) is more compelling and persuasive. DM Phil Brake won't give details-leaves that to the architects. Not concerned where the trees, etc. go. Nor can we exclude Paul Hadley (PH) from meeting with the town. Need to have the architects, PB and PH to come to meeting.

DM They won't add anything, have no strong preferences and might all be confusing. We can get current state of the plan that shows the type and location of planting goals to clarify the respective roles of the T and the town and how it will be managed. Most of the planting will be done on town-owned land. Issue is what will happen to the \$150K from the town. Can be more confusing. MM DM is right. CPC needs to know what the T plans to do and what it would look like with just the T's plan. It will be stark without town contribution. We need permission to work within the T's right of way. DM is trying to track this. Is the town willing to grant easements to the T at no cost? The trade-off is easements for ability to plant on T's property. T knows we're working on a plan. The T will put in granite benches.

The risk is that Town Meeting will not approve the funding. We do not have a memorandum of understanding (MOU) at this point for maintenance of elevators. Rights of Way could be included in the T's MOU. Let us plant. Need a letter of agreement or letter of intent that would set up easements and MOU. The platform just barely fits in the right of way. The plantings would not be in the right of way. DM to check with Cory to see where the T boundaries are. CPC wants detail and breakdown of what the T's \$60K would include. We have or will have a 90% design. This is not submitted to CPC. Design costs will run an estimated \$25,000. CPC wants a list of materials and of plantings. Could MM try to get landscape architect to meet with HDC to prepare lists of materials and costs? CPC to get costs, order of priority. Trees first then benches and the costs for both. RR Use a spreadsheet and sketch out the plan to show the trees, shrubs and benches. AR We can get costing from a landscaper architect. Can MM ask Dean for input for costing? We need salt-tolerant plants. What can the town do this for?

Were does David Honn want to put trees to shield Jones Tavern? Follow up. DM to email David. Have Dean cost out plantings. Contact Peter Lucacic. Get letters of support from Jones Tavern. MM to talk to Glenn Burger from Exchange Hall. Need letters in support from both Exchange Hall and Jones Tavern. Get list of abutters on Martin and Maple Streets to attend the CPC meeting. Expect a vote at the end of February. Tory is the liaison. The next CPC meeting will be the deadline for getting participation and information. Letters to CPC as soon as possible from Glen Burger, Ironworks Farm, Frank Chu(?). DM to work with Martin and Maple residents. Contact Chris Dolmis at South Acton Congregational Church. DM We need a letter of Intent off to the MBTA. Need a plan from David Honn and Peter Lucacic. Data to go back to CPC, Contact Tory. MM to gather RR, David Honn and Peter Lucacic .

Loan Program General Discussion: No action proposed or taken. KAB to meet with Janet Adachi of BoS.

Meeting adjourned at 10:15.

Respectfully submitted,


David T. Barrat,
Secretary